

SB 646



SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

February 3, 2015, 2:45 P.M.

Room 225

(Testimony is 2 pages long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 646

Chair Gabbard and members of the Energy and Environment Committee:

The Blue Planet Foundation supports SB 646, a measure which permits the installation of clotheslines at any residential dwelling, apartment, condominium, or townhouse, subject to reasonable restrictions. This measure clarifies what qualifies as a reasonable restriction.

This measure will help ensure that Hawai'i homeowners have the choice to save money and save energy by using a clothesline to dry their clothes. Electric clothes dryers can consume upwards of 10% of a household's energy demand. Reducing the use of clothes dryers could substantially decrease the amount of fossil fuel electricity that Hawaii's households require.

Unfortunately, many homeowner associations continue to have unreasonable restrictions on use of using the sun to dry clothes—clotheslines—and some simply make it very difficult to use a clothesline. For example, the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions for the Ewa by Gentry development¹ state that *"No outside clothesline or other outside clothes drying or airing facilities shall be permitted except that which is located within a fenced yard and not visible from the street or neighboring properties."* While such an aesthetic condition might have been acceptable 20 years ago, it makes no sense today to restrict smart energy-saving behavior given high energy prices and the effect our fossil fuel use is having on the climate.

While legislative measures involving clotheslines may seem ridiculous to some, the value is very serious: to provide residents the option of reducing their energy use if they chose. Given the cost of electricity and urgent need to move toward energy independence, Hawai'i homeowners should have the choice to save money and save energy by using the hot sun and trade winds to dry their clothes. This may sound frivolous, but when you consider that the average family produces over one ton of greenhouse gas annually from typical electric clothes dryer usage, any

¹ Ewa by Gentry Community Association. "Design Committee Rules & Regulations." 04/24/08

restriction on clothesline use seems inappropriate. Yet this measure doesn't prevent any homeowner association rules on clothesline usage, only those that are unreasonable. Clotheslines also save money. Families switching to a clothesline can expect to save hundreds annually on their electricity bill.

If this measure enables 1000 households to replace typical clothes dryer usage (~3 hours per week) with drying in the sun, those households would save over \$260,000 annually while preventing 700 tons of greenhouse gas pollution.

This measure is a logical extension to the “Right to Dry” law passed into law in 2011 prohibiting restrictions that prevent individuals from installing clotheslines on houses or townhomes that they own.

While we are searching for ways to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel, save residents’ money, and decrease global warming pollution, let’s not forget about the basic—and decidedly low-tech—approaches to energy conservation. This bill removes yet another barrier to local residents doing the right thing for the environment and the economy.

Let’s give everyone the Right to Dry. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, “we must all hang together, or we will all hang separately.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.